STATEMENT FOR MANAGEMENT

Sequoia and Kings Canyon



NATIONAL PARKS · CALIFORNIA

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STATEMENT FOR MANAGEMENT

SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

Recommended: /s/ Stanley T. Albright — 5/13/76
Superintendent — Date

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Regional Director,
Western Region — Date

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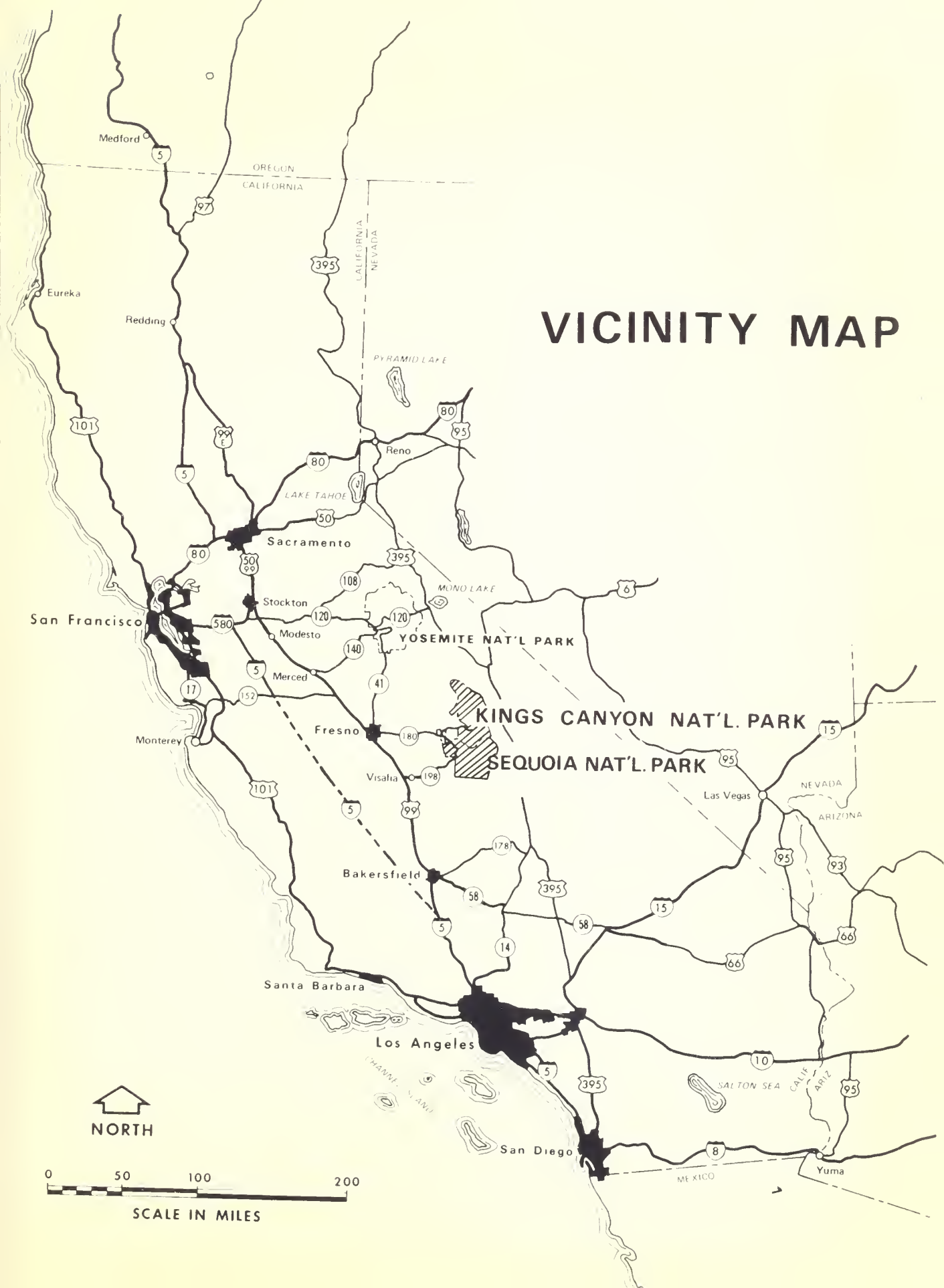
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VICINITY MAP
Medford
OREGON
CALIFORNIA
Eureka
Redding
CALIFORNIA
NEVADA
PYRAMID LAKE
Reno
LAKE TAHOE
Sacramento
San Francisco
Stockton
Modesto
Merced
MONO LAKE
YOSEMITE NAT'L PARK
KINGS CANYON NAT'L. PARK
SEQUOIA NAT'L. PARK
Fresno
Monterey
Visalia
Bakersfield
Las Vegas
NEVADA
ARIZONA
Santa Barbara
Los Angeles
SALTON SEA
CALIF
ARIZ
San Diego
MEXICO
Yuma
NORTH
0 50 100 200
SCALE IN MILES

Statement for Management

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

PURPOSE OF THE PARKS

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks were established because of the unique values of all their natural resources but especially their wilderness character and their vegetation, with emphasis on giant sequoia forests. The Parks were also established as "public parks" for the enjoyment and benefit of people so the beauty of the Parks could be experienced.

ESTABLISHING LEGISLATION

Sequoia National Park, by its establishing Act of September 25, 1890, was "dedicated and set apart as a public park, or pleasuring ground, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people" and "for the preservation from injury of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities or wonders" and "their retention in their natural condition." The primary purpose for establishment, the preservation of Park forests, especially sequoia forests, is set out in the preamble - "Whereas, the rapid destruction of timber and ornamental trees in various parts of the United States, some of which trees are the wonders of the world on account of their size and limited number growing, makes it a matter of importance that at least some of said forests should be preserved."

Kings Canyon National Park was established by the Act of March 4, 1940. The Act abolished General Grant National Park, including it as part of Kings Canyon, and provided that the area was "dedicated and set apart as a public park ... for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." It also provided that the Secretary of the Interior "in order to insure the permanent preservation of the wilderness character of the Park may, in his discretion, limit the character

and number of privileges" within the Park. The Act also provided that the administration, protection, and development of the Park be "subject to the Act of August 25, 1916, entitled 'An Act to Establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes.'"

SIGNIFICANCE OF PARK RESOURCES

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks include the highest and most rugged portions of the Sierra Nevada range. The Parks are predominately mountains and canyons, including a complete spectrum of life zones from foothill elevations of 2000' to Mount Whitney, 14,494', the highest point in the conterminous United States.

The higher mountains contain hundreds of lakes in basins etched out of granite by ancient glaciers long disappeared. Thousands of miles of rushing mountain streams course through the canyons gathering into major forks of the Kaweah, Kern, Kings, and San Joaquin Rivers. High mountain meadows of all sizes, a few as large as several hundred acres, lie in the canyons and on the plateaus.

Vegetation is especially diverse beginning as open oak savannah and chaparral brush fields on the foothill slopes, progressing upward through climatically influenced bands through ponderosa pine forests and mixed conifer forests, which include giant sequoia groves, fir forests, and to the high elevation foxtail pine and extensive lodgepole pine forests. These forests are outstanding

examples of pristine vegetation of the west slope of the Sierra. Outside the Parks, similar ecosystems have been completely altered by man through logging, agriculture, grazing, rural developments, and other activities. A few exceptions include some areas preserved by wilderness classification but include only high elevation ecosystems. The sequoia forests are without parallel anywhere both as to extent of forests and size of individual specimens. The General Sherman tree is recognized to be the largest known living thing on the planet and other park trees approach its bulk.

The Parks provide native habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife. The existence of some species is potentially threatened, including California Bighorn Sheep and the Little Kern Golden Trout, and they probably persist as species only because the park habitat is preserved. Some other species of fish and wildlife characterizing the southern Sierra are abundant and can be readily viewed. Black bear, mule deer, and trout are examples.

The Parks are relatively diverse geologically. Granite bedrock has been scoured into rugged forms and polished by glaciers. There are several beautiful marble caves. Crystal Cave is seen by thousands of tour-guided visitors annually.

The above describe the natural resources which qualified the areas' inclusion into the National Park System. The primary resources

which undoubtedly brought about National Park status were wilderness and the forest vegetation, especially sequoia forests. These resources were cited in Acts establishing the area as Parks - the wisdom and rationale were sound. All of the Parks' resources are like building blocks, and the logical capstone is wilderness, pure and simple, many ecological factors working within a natural system unaltered by man. The sequoia forests are literally a wonder of the world, and nowhere do they exist as in the magnificent groves in the Parks.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks include prehistoric aboriginal sites such as Hospital Rock, structures representing pioneer settlement and the history of the utopian Kaweah Colony (Cattle Cabin, Gamlin Cabin, Squatter's Cabin), historic roads and trails, cabins built by fur trappers, stockmen and miners, and even structures of significance in the history of science such as the Smithsonian Institution Shelter on Mount Whitney. Associated with the history of the park itself are historically and/or architecturally significant buildings such as a ranger patrol cabin (Quinn) dating from the years of Army management of the parks before the birth of the National Park Service, and ranger stations, residences and other buildings representing the early years of the National Park Service and distinctive rustic architectural styles prevalent during that era. There are also equally significant early concessioner structures, representing a further variety of rustic architectural styles.

Some of these cultural resources have been managed as such for many years, while others have only recently been identified and their

significance evaluated. Those properties owned by the National Park Service which are potentially eligible for the National Register have been identified in the List of Classified Structures pending a nomination or formal determination of eligibility.

Although only two archeological investigation projects have resulted in scientific excavations, numerous sites of prehistoric and historic native California people have been recorded within the Parks. Historic and anthropological research shows that the Western and Eastern Mono groups did travel through and occupy various portions of the Parks, particularly the Kings Canyon and Keweah River portions. Excavations in Cedar Grove at site Fre-259 yielded evidence of Eastern Mono trading parties while the significant excavations at Hospital Rock resulted in the recovery of many artifacts, human burials, and other materials of the Potwisha group of the Western Mono. This site has regional significance and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Recent surveys of Cedar Grove and certain development areas of the Parks have yielded a number of sites but involved no excavations. The interpretive themes of the Parks have included trailside stops and displays relating the aboriginal story for many years.

LAND CLASSIFICATION

The lands in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks meet the standards of all four classifications contained in the current Management Policies. The overwhelming portion of lands fall into the Natural Environment category.

The classifications are as follows:

Natural Environment

Lands that remain largely unaltered by human activity except for approved developments essential for the management, use, and appreciation of the area. Lands in these Parks are divided into the following sub-zones:

Wilderness Sub-Zone

Lands being considered for wilderness and managed as de facto wilderness.

Acres: 790,770

Environmental Protection Sub-Zone

Includes lands set aside to provide natural research areas for the study of timber, mammals, erosions, alpine meadows, tundra lakes and ponds, complex mountains, caves, and caverns.

Acres: 50,269*

*A portion of the Environmental Protection Sub-Zone (50,119 acres) is also included in the Wilderness acreage.

Outstanding Natural Features Sub-Zone

Includes lands containing outstanding groves of the giant sequoia (Sequoiadendrum giganteum) for which these Parks were established.

Acres: 13,900*

Natural Environment Sub-Zone

Includes lands adjacent to park roads, interpretive facilities, and visitor facilities such as picnic areas.

Acres: 46,902

Historic

Includes land having the remains of Indian habitation, evidence of early white settlements and historic utilizations.

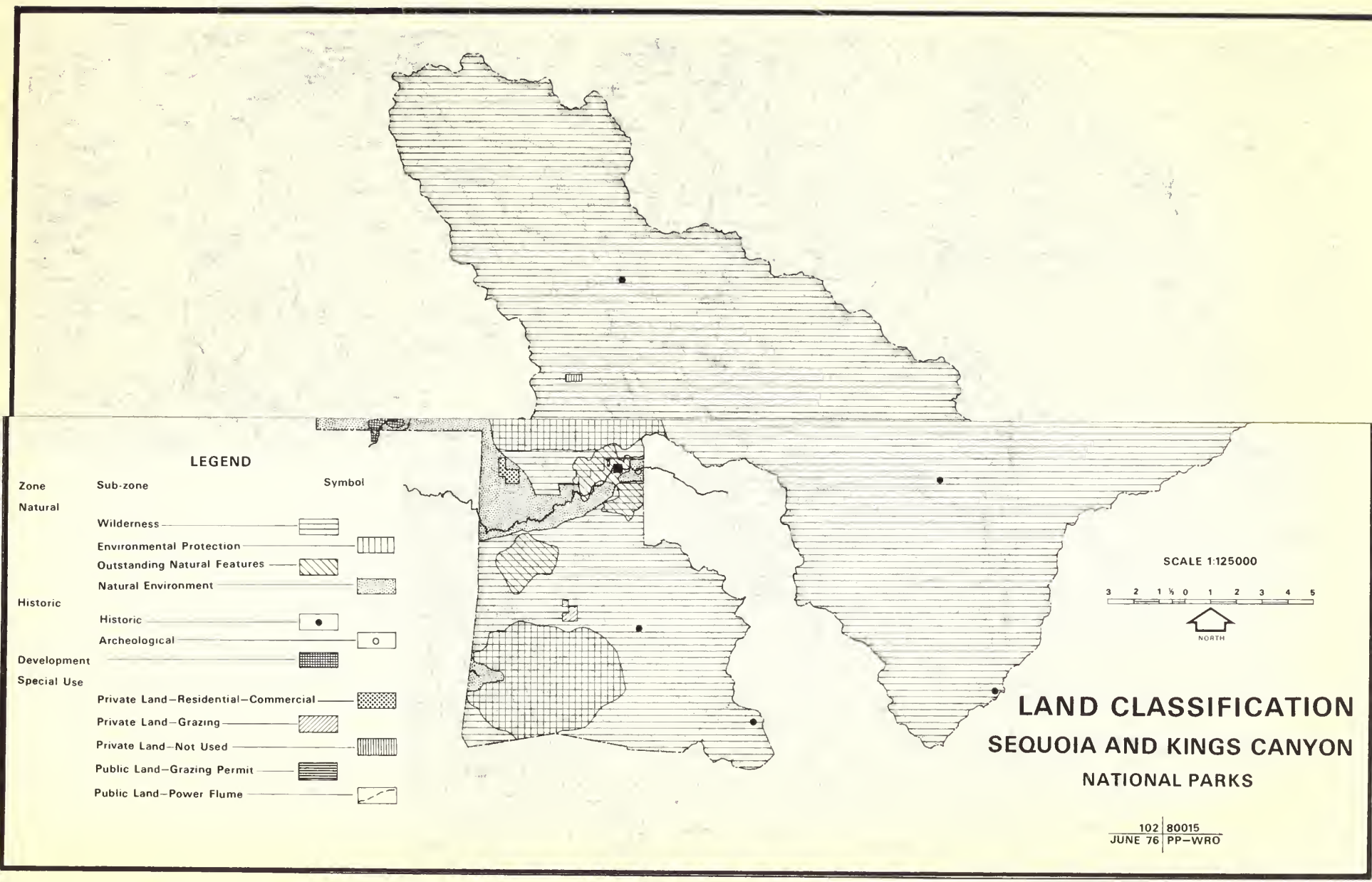
Acres: 300**

Development

This includes high density use areas at Giant Forest, Lodgepole, Grant Grove, Cedar Grove, and Ash Mountain. These lands contain campgrounds, visitor service facilities, concessioner facilities, administrative facilities, utility lines, and maintenance facilities. These areas are managed to provide recreational opportunities for visitors and an operation base for park management.

Acres: 2,392***

*A portion of the outstanding Natural Features Sub-Zone (7,274 acres is also included in the Wilderness Sub-Zone acreage.
**Historic Zone Acreages are also included in various other zones.
***Development Acreage at Giant Forest (324 acres) also included in Outstanding Natural Features Sub-Zone acreage.


LEGEND
Zone
Sub-zone
Symbol
Natural
Wilderness
Environmental Protection
Outstanding Natural Features
Natural Environment
Historic
Historic
Archeological
Development
Special Use
Private Land–Residential–Commercial
Private Land–Grazing
Private Land–Not Used
Public Land–Grazing Permit
Public Land–Power Flume
SCALE 1:125000
3 2 1 ½ 0 1 2 3 4 5
NORTH
LAND CLASSIFICATION
SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON
NATIONAL PARKS
102 | 80015
JUNE 76 | PP–WRO

LEGEND

Zone	Sub-zone	Symbol
Natural		
	Wilderness	
	Environmental Protection	
	Outstanding Natural Features	
	Natural Environment	
Historic		
	Historic	
	Archeological	
Development		
Special Use		
	Private Land–Residential–Commercial	
	Private Land–Grazing	
	Private Land–Not Used	
	Public Land–Grazing Permit	
	Public Land–Power Flume	

SCALE 1:125000

3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

NORTH

LAND CLASSIFICATION

SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON

NATIONAL PARKS

102 | 80015
JUNE 76 | PP–WRO

Special Use

Special uses of lands not usually permitted in a natural area.

Private Development Sub-Zone

Includes private lands located at the village of Wilsonia, at Cahoon Meadow, the Loverin property west of Oriole Lake, and a parcel south of Mt. Goddard.

Acres: 443

Grazing Permit - Public Land

Acres: 120*

Southern California Edison Flumes

Approximate Miles: 4

INFLUENCES ON MANAGEMENT

Legislative - Administrative Constraints

Despite numerous legislative actions that have adjusted the boundaries of both Parks, few have imposed administrative constraints on the management and use of these Parks.

1. Kaweah No. 3 is a hydroelectric project operated by Southern California Edison. The project diverts water from 4½ miles of the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River inside Sequoia National Park. Preliminary surveys were conducted from 1902-1904 and a permit to construct was granted in 1907. Operations began in May of 1913 under

*Also included in Wilderness acreage.

a 50-year permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior on March 5, 1912. That part of the facility located outside the Park was operated pursuant to a 50-year Federal Power Commission permit which expired on August 6, 1974. Under special legislation enacted June 21, 1963 (P.L. 88-47, 77 Stat. 70), the National Park Service issued a 10-year permit for continuation of the project until the expiration of the Federal Power Commission permit - August 6, 1974. Under the Federal Power Act as amended in 1921 (41 Stat. 1353) and under the Act of July 13, 1926 (44 Stat. 820), which revised the boundary of Sequoia National Park, no power project may be permitted on park lands ". . . without specific authority of the Congress."

Such authority for the continuation of Kaweah No. 3 was again granted on December 14, 1974, under Public Law 93522. This Law restricted the term of the permit to 10 years and requires that the National Park Service report to Congress with respect to the impact of the project not less than 180 days prior to the expiration date of the permit which is December 14, 1985.

2. By action of the California State Legislature on April 15, 1919, and accepted by an Act of Congress on June 2, 1920 (41 Stat. 731), the State of California ceded exclusive jurisdiction to the United States on all territory which was then, or may thereafter be included, in Sequoia and General Grant National Parks. On April 7, 1943, the

State ceded jurisdiction over those lands in Kings Canyon National Park. On March 1, 1967, the Director of the National Park Service accepted exclusive jurisdiction for all lands added to Kings Canyon National Park as well as all of those accepted April 21, 1945, by Secretary of the Interior Ickes. In ceding jurisdiction, the State reserved the right to serve civil or criminal process, to tax persons and corporations, their franchises and property in the Parks, and to fix and collect license fees for fishing.

3. The Act of March 4, 1940, which established Kings Canyon National Park also permits the movement, without charges, of stock and vehicular traffic to and from National Forest lands on either side of the Grant Grove boundary extension.

4. An Act of July 1, 1946 (60 Stat. 348; 377), prohibits the use of any appropriations made for the National Park Service for road construction in Kings Canyon National Park except on the floor of the canyon of the South Fork of the Kings River and the Grant Grove section of that Park.

5. The General Grant Tree was dedicated by the Federal Government as the Nation's Christmas Tree on April 26, 1926. A Joint Resolution dated March 29, 1956, declared the General Grant Tree to be

a national shrine in memory of the men and women of the Armed Forces who have died serving their country, and directed the Secretary of the Interior to make appropriate provisions for its perpetual care and maintenance.

6. The Act of September 25, 1890, which established Sequoia National Park, limited the granting of leases for building purposes to accommodate park visitors to terms not exceeding 10 years and parcels of land not exceeding five acres (16 USC 43). This was amended by an Act of July 3, 1926, to increase the duration of the lease not to exceed 20 years and to increase the sizes of the parcels not to exceed 10 acres, and further limited these to any one place and to any one person or persons or company (16 USC 45b).

An opinion from the Field Solicitor dated March 15, 1976, states that in light of the general intent of the 1970 legislation relating to Concessions in National Parks, Sequoia National Park should ". . . be given a construction which minimizes its conflict with the Concessions Policy Act of 1965."

This suggests that since lands are no longer leased to concessioners that the 30-year duration with no specific parcel size limitations would apply in the case of concession contracts.

The Act of March 4, 1940, which established Kings Canyon National Park, limited only the granting of privileges to periods not in

excess of five years (16 USC 80c). It also provided that other administration, development, and protection should be in accordance with the Act of September 25, 1890, which established Sequoia National Park (16 USC 43), or the Act of August 25, 1916, which established the National Park Service (16 USC 3). The more restrictive of these limits the size of a parcel to five acres (16 USC 43). An Act of August 17, 1950, repealed these statutory limitations applicable to Kings Canyon National Park in their entirety. Therefore the granting of privileges within Kings Canyon is governed by the legislation which governs the National Park System as a whole.

7. In 1952, the Sierra Club deeded an easement for road purposes across an 80-acre tract of Club property in Cedar Grove in order that the National Park Service could extend a road to Copper Creek (Road's End). The easement contained 13.24 acres, more or less, and included a condition that said lands should not be used for parking purposes. In September 1973 the National Park Service purchased fee title to this 80-acre tract of Sierra Club property "subject to existing easements of record for public roads and highways, public utilities, railroads, pipelines, ditches, canals, and reservations contained in Patent." This further excepted and reserved "a covenant running with the above described land that the property described will be retained in its entirety as open

space in its natural state" and further restricted the National Park Service from grazing or permitting the property to be grazed by domestic livestock.

8. One lifetime grazing permittee still runs cattle in the Sugarloaf area of Kings Canyon National Park. The Superintendent can control grazing limits through the permit, thereby controlling potential resource damage.

Regional Influences

1. The State of California, the U. S. Forest Service, the Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Land Management, County government, and private interests all control and manage lands and resources in the region adjacent to these Parks. Particularly pertinent are those lands managed by the U. S. Forest Service (Sierra, Sequoia, and Inyo National Forests) which surround the Parks. As pressures intensify for the full utilization of these bordering lands, it is conceivable that new and different resource uses (i.e., recreational pursuits) could have an impact not now present on park lands.

2. Industrial and agricultural air pollution, an increasing problem in the San Joaquin Valley, is already affecting ponderosa pines in the vicinity of Grant Grove in Kings Canyon National Park, and at Crystal Cave and Crescent Meadow in Sequoia National Park. While sequoias appear to be more resistant to air pollution than other species, this environmental problem could have far-reaching consequences in the years ahead.

3. While the Parks are readily accessible by road, a new California Transportation Plan proposes a mass transportation-rapid transit network for the State which would make the Parks even more accessible. Park management must keep abreast of the State as its mass transportation plans develop.

4. Since its inception, the Sierra Club has been associated with conservation of the Sierra Nevada. A recent indication of their accelerated interest has been the formulation of a Sierra task force to monitor management activities in all three Sierra Nevada National Parks. Watchdog efforts, such as this, make it mandatory that management utilize all its options in keeping the public aware and informed.

5. Agriculture is the major industry in the Tulare Lake Basin which receives water from the headwaters of major park drainages, the Middle and South Forks of the Kings River, the Kern River, and the North, Middle, East, and South Forks of the Kaweah River. The Tulare Lake Basin is one of the most important agricultural areas in the world. The above rivers, plus the North Fork of the Kings and the Tule which drain in areas outside Parks' boundaries, provide the bulk of the native surface waters available in the Basin.

In-Park Influences

Commitments at the time of park establishment, prior management decisions, former administrative policies, inter-Departmental agreements, external activities by persons and organizations, and modern technology directly and indirectly affect the Parks' landscape and biota, as outlined below.

1. Approximately 450 acres of private inholdings, including both improved and unimproved lots, are located at five different sites in the Parks. The largest single concentration of homesites is found in Wilsonia, Grant Grove section of Kings Canyon National Park. In July 1975, there were 215 tracts remaining in private ownership in the Wilsonia subdivision. This thickly settled subdivision has seemingly no setback provisions, a very thin soil mantle, and a limited water supply. Most sewage disposal systems will not meet County standards. These environmental impacts, coupled with the administrative costs and National Park Service policy, indicate a need to acquire these lands.

One tract, Cahoon Meadow in Sequoia National Park, consists of 160 unimproved, unfenced acres, and is used for cattle grazing. The exact location of this tract is unknown which compounds the difficulty of enforcing trespass. Resource damage occurring in this fragile meadow area must be controlled, and acquisition is the only feasible solution.

2. Three of the four major developed areas in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks have active planning documents underway. Concessioner, maintenance, and visitor use facilities throughout the Parks need to be replaced or upgraded. Employee quarters are especially critical. Water supplies and sewerage systems need to be replaced at both the Giant Forest/Lodgepole area and at Grant Grove. In addition and most critical, the Concessioner's principal development is presently located in Giant Forest - one of the larger groves of giant sequoias. The concentrated impact of man, his vehicle, and the myriad of accouterments act adversely on the environment and nature's normally occurring processes.

3. Until 1967 administrative policy required fast, aggressive action on all fires regardless of location. As a result of policy revision, 70 percent of the Park, most of which is above 8,500 feet, was placed in a Natural Fire Management Zone. Lightning-caused fires in this zone are allowed to continue to burn, with few limitations. In the middle and lower elevational zones, all fires are suppressed. Within the sequoia groves, a prescribed burning program is in effect in an effort to reduce the fuel buildup to the point where naturally occurring fires can again be allowed to burn with few restrictions.

4. Backcountry use is controlled by daily quotas which are in effect at the major trailheads from June 15 to September 15. Limitations also exist on party size, numbers of stock, grazing limits, and open fires. Such limitations were put in effect to control resource damage from overuse. The limits are being studied and will be adjusted accordingly to balance use with resource protection.

5. Cloud seeding in some areas adjacent to and above the Parks has been carried out for the past 20 years by Atmospherics, Inc., under contract paid for by the Kings River Conservation District. An evaluation of the effectiveness attributes about a 10 percent precipitation increase as a result of this activity. This will cause shifts of affected ecosystems to an unknown extent.

6. An active research program continually provides information of value to the proper management of park resources. Among the more important studies are those on the natural role of fire in various park ecosystems and human impact in the backcountry.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Restore and/or maintain the natural ecosystems of these Parks as they were prior to the advent of human technology.

- - Encourage and support an active research program designed to provide management with decision assistance in all aspects of planning, development, and management.

- - Perpetuate wildlife populations in a natural environment while protecting visitors from harm.

- - Give special consideration to the protection of those rare or endangered plant and/or animal species found in the Parks.

- - Allow naturally occurring fires to fulfill their role as ecosystem determinators to the fullest possible extent with particular attention given to the sequoia groves.

- - Preserve and maintain the natural sequoia groves to perpetuate the prime scenic resource.

- - Limit helicopter use in the backcountry to the minimum necessary to meet the needs of management to achieve the purpose of the area.

Provide quality opportunities for visitor understanding, compatible use, and enjoyment of the Parks' resources.

- - Interpret Sequoia and Kings Canyon as a unit, not as two distinct and unrelated places.

- - Emphasize the remarkable giant sequoia trees and the spectacular High Sierra wilderness as main interpretive themes.

- - Identify, preserve, and interpret important natural, historical, or archeological features found in these Parks.

- - Provide seasonal levels of operations which are responsive to visitor use patterns.

- - Control and direct backcountry use in the interest of protecting park resources and visitor enjoyment.

Eliminate all nonconforming uses within these Parks.

- - Acquire existing private lands within the Parks.

  Until such time as these lands can be acquired, private landowners will be subjected to no more or no less control than they would be if located outside the Parks as related to building codes, safety, and health standards.

- - Eliminate or regulate the operation of the hydroelectric plant known as Kaweah #3.

Cooperate with other agencies and outside interests in the development of plans and major management programs.

Maintain a professional level of visitor and employee protection through effective programs in law enforcement, safety management, and public health.

- - Maintain the law enforcement profile at the minimum level adequate to discharge our responsibilities in employee and visitor safety.

- - Maintain all facilities, both National Park Service and concession, in accordance with applicable public health and safety standards.

- - Identify and remove tree hazards to prevent property damage or personal injury.

Limit National Park Service and concession development to that necessary and appropriate for the public use and enjoyment of these Parks, and eliminate or relocate facilities that intrude on the primary resources.

- - Relocate development within Giant Forest to an area outside the prime resource.

- - Seek legislation to clarify limitations on leases for concession operations as outlined in the enabling legislation for the Parks.

- - Limit concessioner-operated overnight accommodations to present levels (2,000 pillows) pending completion of planning and capacity studies.

- - Limit developed campsites to 1971 levels (1,700) pending completion of on-going planning and capacity studies.

- - Maintain the Wolverton ski area as a family type facility with only moderate upgrading to provide for visitor safety, and prohibit development of additional ski areas.

- - Insure that concessioner accommodations are provided in a price range that will best serve all park visitors.